REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In support of the request for continuing examination being filed herewith, remaining claims 8-13 of this application are being canceled and replaced by new claims 20-25. Reconsideration of this application in view of the new claims is respectfully requested.

The method of the present invention provides a solution to the problem of cell deformation that can arise in rotationally misaligned extrudate pieces during drying and/or firing, such misalignment typically resulting in a failure of the extruded products to meet increasingly tight tolerances for cell alignment (paragraph [0003] of the specification). In accordance with the invention, multiple steps to detect and correct misalignments that can arise during the extrusion, cutting, and transporting of pieces of the extrudate to a dryer are employed.

More particularly, in accordance with claim 20 of the application, a reference mark is first applied to the extrudate as it is extruded onto a support (paragraph [0021] of the specification), corkscrew deformation revealed by mark misalignment is corrected prior to cutting into sections (paragraphs [0020] and [0023] of the specification), the reference mark on the cut sections of extrudate is again optically read and any misalignment of the sections again corrected (paragraphs [0025]-[0026] of the specification), the cut sections are then transferred to dryer trays (paragraphs [0027]-[0028] of the specification), and the ends of the cut extrudate sections are finally imaged again while in place on the dryer trays for comparison to a target range for alignment on the trays and for the rejection of misaligned extrudate pieces (paragraph [0029] of the specification).

The prior art cited in support of the various rejections of claims 8-13 as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103 fails to teach or suggest the claimed method. Avery (U.S. Patent No. 5,205,991) fails to suggest detecting and correcting for extrudate misalignment at any stage. DeMasters (U.S. Patent No. 5,431,866) fails to suggest correcting striped plastic pipe twisting at any point downstream of the pipe extruder/pipe rotator assembly (e.g. no suggestion to realign cut sections of the extruded pipe). Nelson (U.S. Patent No. 4,906,170) fails to suggest using printed labeling on extruded plastic pipe to detect or correct for pipe or label misalignment after cutting. Sumino (U.S. Patent No. 5,222,594) is non-analogous conveyor art and fails to suggest extruding, marking, or cutting (therefore also failing to suggest any re-alignment of cut sections) of a transfer belt used to pipe-convey powdered or granular materials.

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully submit that the claims 20-25 of this application are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly favorable reconsideration of this application and the issuance of a Notice of Allowance herein are courteously solicited.

Applicants believe that only a one-month extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely, but contingently request that the Office grant such further time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as is necessary to make this Reply timely, if in fact such a further extension is required. In that contingency the Office is hereby authorized to charge any necessary extension fee or surcharge to the deposit account of Corning Incorporated, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Respectfully submitted,

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